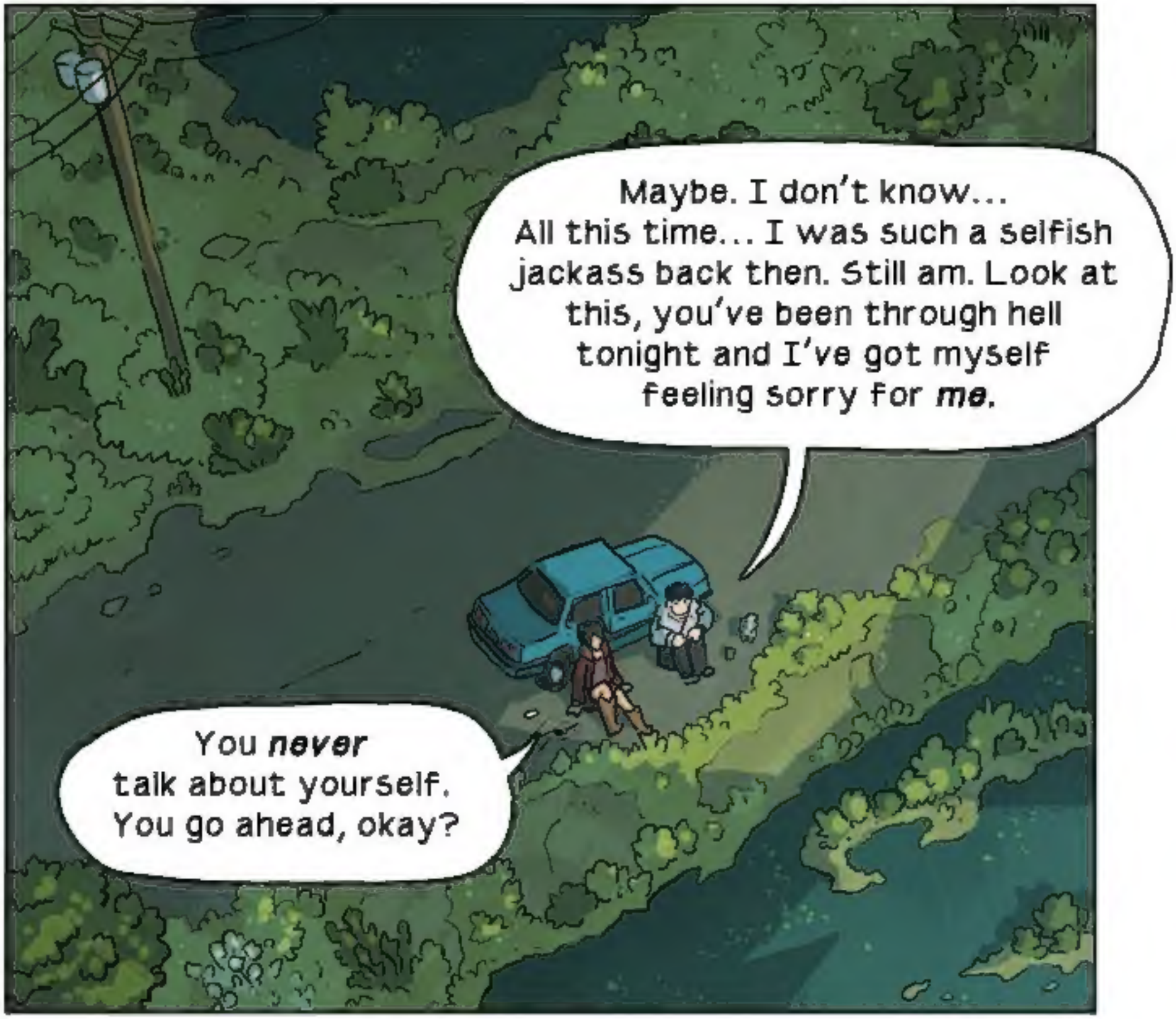
# THE SWORD INTERVAL

BY BEN FLEUTER

Eighteenth birthdays...
Eighteen excuses I've made to not get involved.
Could be just seventeen.


Maybe. I don't know... All this time... I was such a selfish jackass back then. Still am. Look at this, you've been through hell tonight and I've got myself feeling sorry for *me*.
You *never* talk about yourself. You go ahead, okay?

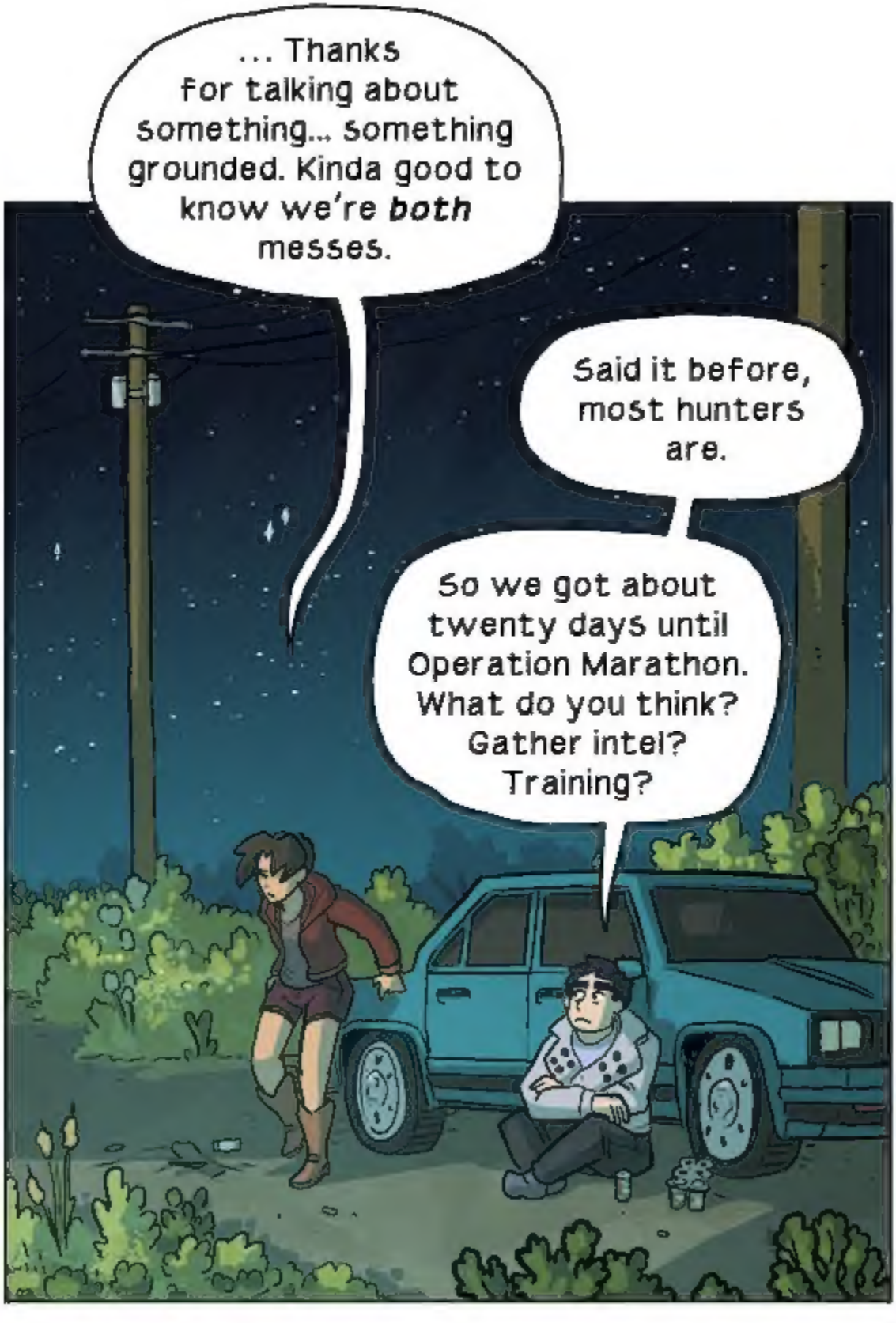
Fall, your family was taken from you. One way or another, through Atlas or the Hierophant, they were stolen.
It has to be insane to you that I'd be so... so scared to reconnect to a son that I ignored.

Whffff... I dunno if this helps dude, but I spent years in foster care. I've met kids that survived neglectful to downright monstrous relatives.

Sometimes blood isn't sacred.
Sometimes family has to be earned.

I can't tell you if Cody'd wanna hear from you or not. Can't tell you if he'd appreciate your money, either.

You dunno if you'd be making things better or worse for him, but you might know what's best for *you.*
...Huh.

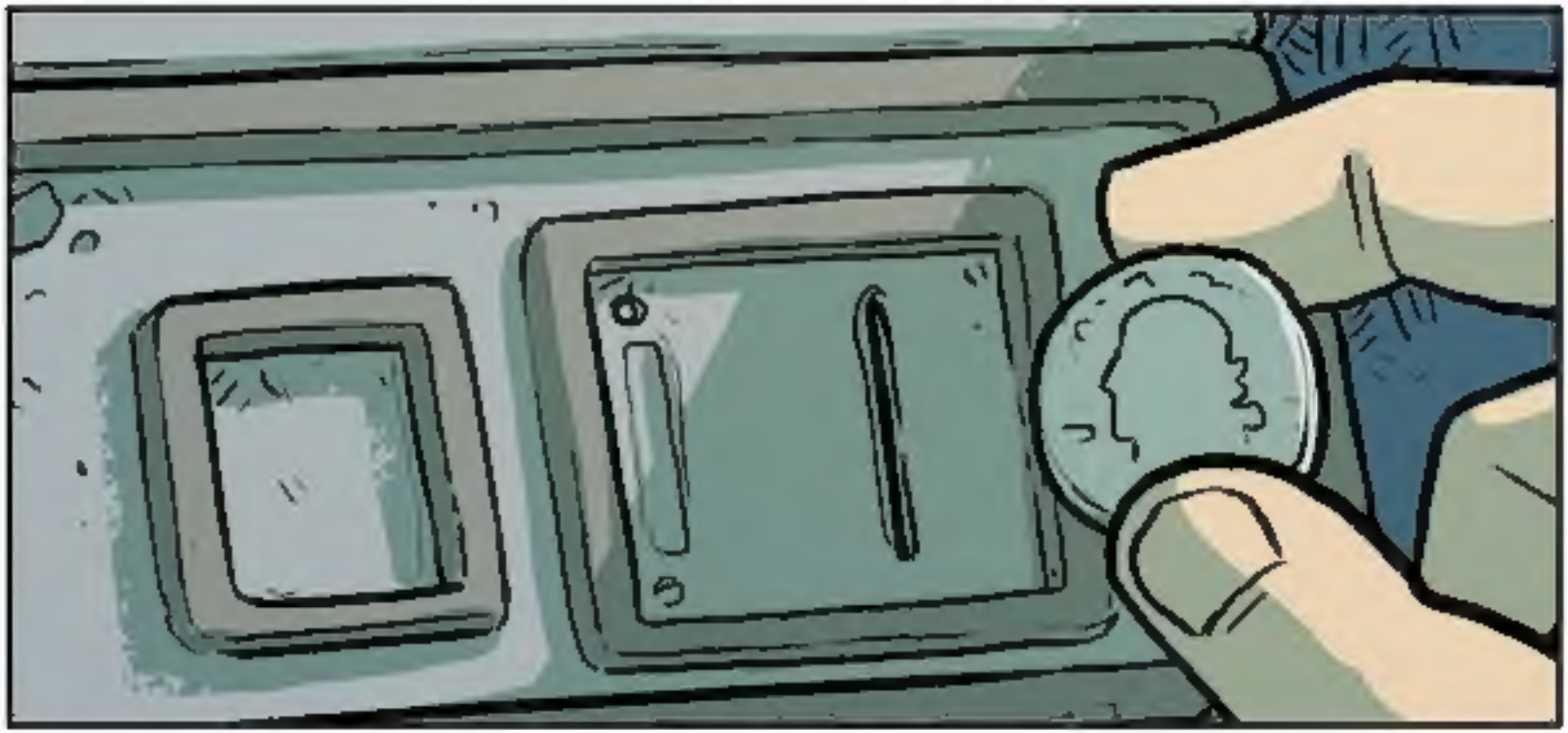

... Thanks for talking about something... something grounded. Kinda good to know we're **both** messes.
Said it before, most hunters are.
So we got about twenty days until Operation Marathon. What do you think? Gather intel? Training?

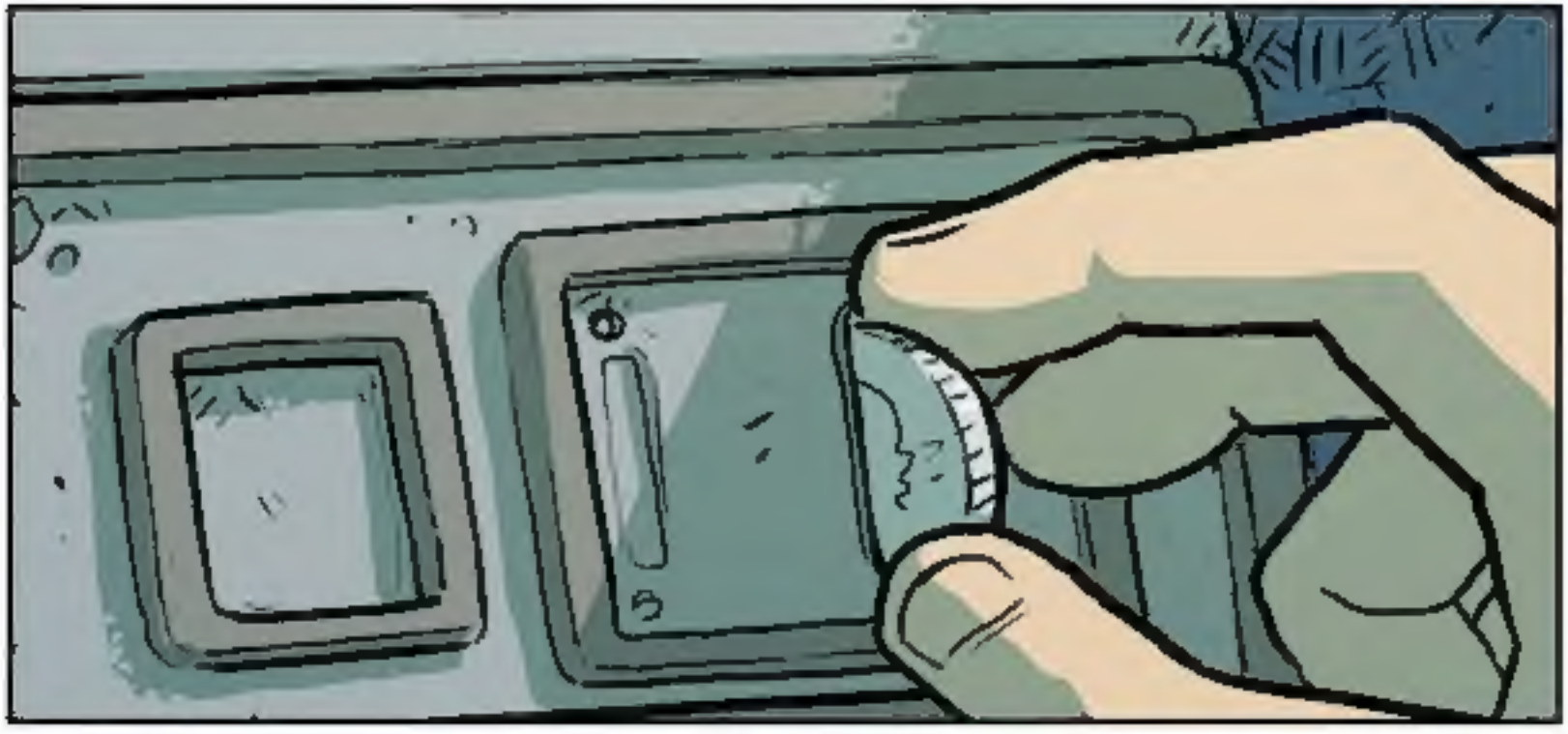
Twenty spa days.
Maybe less than that.

More than one, less than twenty spa days.

Summers.
This is the Verdant Hunter.

The Marathon job. Yeah. Given it thought. I'll take it.





...Cody?